

# Get Their Attention

By Bob Osgoodby

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Studies show that you have less than five seconds to get the attention of a reader. Think about your daily newspaper. Most people scan the paper. If the headline gets their attention, they will probably read the rest of the article. If it doesn't, they probably skip over that story, and continue scanning until they see something of interest.

The first thing that should be seen is your headline. If you look at your Newspaper, the headlines are usually short, in a larger type, bold print, and give a good idea as to what the article is all about.

The same holds true when writing an advertisement. If your headline is weak, your ad probably won't get read. Your headline can make or break your ad campaign.

Probably the most difficult copy to write is for a classified ad. You only have four or five lines to get your message across including your headline. If you can put your headline in bold print, that will make it stand out. If you can't, consider adding special characters such as - ## your headline ##. We are conditioned to read letters and numbers, but not special characters. This will help your headline to stand out.

Another trick is to use white space. A headline that is centered on the first line of the ad is more noticeable than one that is buried in the rest of the text. If your headline is short (3 or 4 words) consider using ALL CAPS. Notice I said - consider. Never put your entire ad in all caps as we are not conditioned to read something written that way. Also, many people take offense to something written in all caps. That is considered as SHOUTING, at least on the Internet.

So how do you develop an effective headline?

First - write your ad. Make it as long as you want, and make sure you get all of your ideas included. Then, without mercy, cut it to about 5 lines of 65 characters per line. "But", you might say, "I can't get all of my points across in something that short". Face it - you are not trying to sell your entire program with this one ad. You are however, trying to get someone's attention. If they respond, you can send them all the follow-up information necessary.

After you have your ad written, then try to develop some catchy headlines. Keep them short and try to grab your readers attention. After you have written a few - test, retest and test again. If your ad is

in a place that is normally read by your target market, such as an E-zine or Newsletter, you should be able to determine which ads are pulling. You should concentrate this initial advertising in one or two well known publications, so as to keep your costs to a minimum while you are experimenting.

When you find an ad that is working, then you can expand your ad program. In the advertising programs we offer, we see many people competing for the same customer base, with the same product. Good headlines can increase the responses you receive.

Great headlines can ensure that you are getting business while others who are running basically the same ad copy, but with a "blah" headline don't.

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Did you know that subscribers to Bob Osgoodby's Free Ezine the "Tip of the Day" get a Free Ad for their Business at his Web Site? Great Business and Computer Tips - Monday thru Friday.

Instructions on how to place your ad are in the Newsletter. Subscribe at:

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